KURO HAKUSHAKU WA HOSHI O MEDERU

by HISAMU OTO

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HC HANATOYUME COMICS 花とゆめ
黒伯爵は星を愛でる
5
音久無
HISAMU OTO

HANATOYUME COMICS

Kuro Hakushaku Wa Hoshi O Mederu

5

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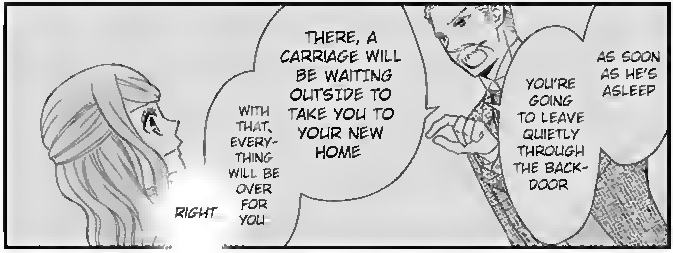
With a man
I should never have fallen for in the first place...
Dear mother in heaven,
I have fallen in love for the first time in my life,

Episode.24
黒伯爵は星を愛でる

I WONDER
WHEN DID IT START POURING LIKE THIS...?
VSSSHHH
CLATTER
CLATTER

I WAS SO BESIDE MYSELF I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE...

...WHAT I DID TO LEON WAS HORRIBLE...

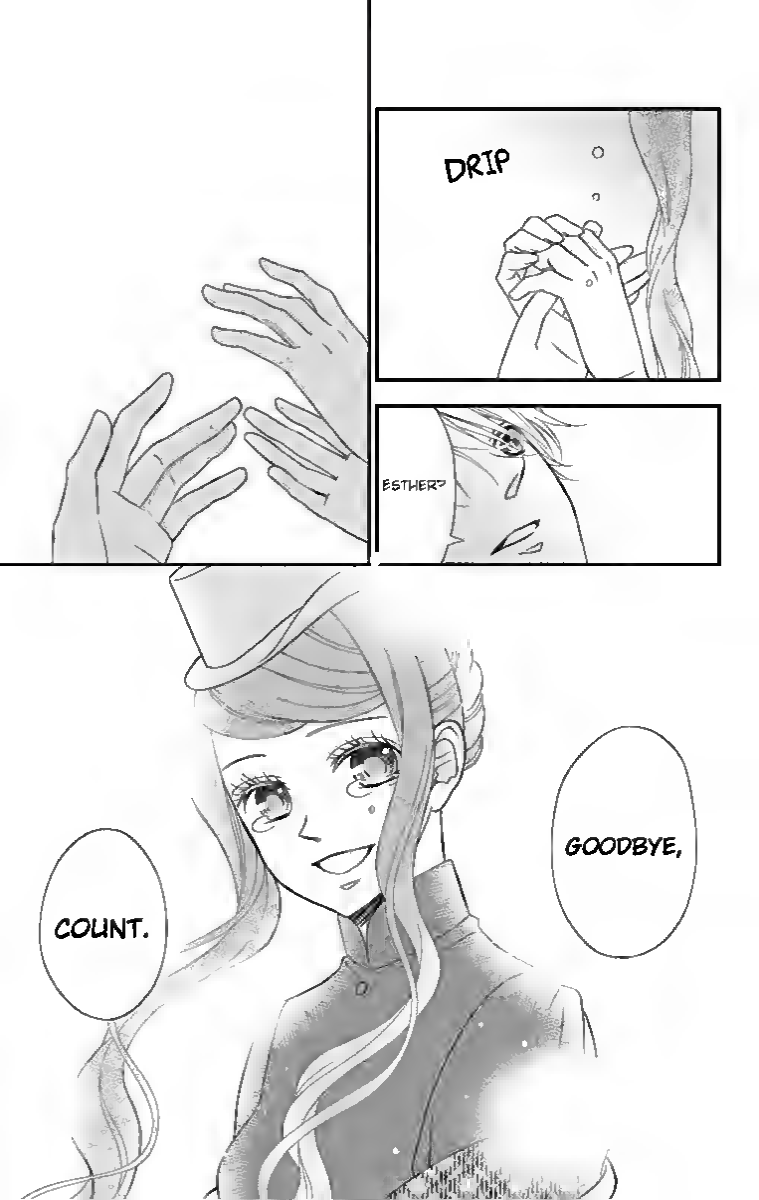

AS SOON AS HE'S ASLEEP
YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE QUIETLY THROUGH THE BACK-DOOR
THERE, A CARRIAGE WILL BE WAITING OUTSIDE TO TAKE YOU TO YOUR NEW HOME
WITH THAT, EVERY-THING WILL BE OVER FOR YOU
RIGHT

Everything's over now...
PATTER

SHAKE
HUH!?
WHAT'S THE MATTER NOW!?
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!!?
WAS THAT THE COACHMAN'S VOICE!? WHAT A COMMOTION!
OF COURSE
YOU STAY WHERE YOU ARE!
KER-CHAK
OI, WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?
SWOOSH
KI
CK
!?

SPLASH
A VAMPIRE....!
THIS PRESENCE...
I MIGHT HAVE OVER-DONE IT.
OOPS.
CREAK
GOOD EVENING. I'M HERE TO PICK YOU UP,
MISS ESTHER.

LEON...
LEON...
MMM..
OH...
ESTHER
YOU'RE HERE?
SO IT WAS JUST A BAD DREAM.

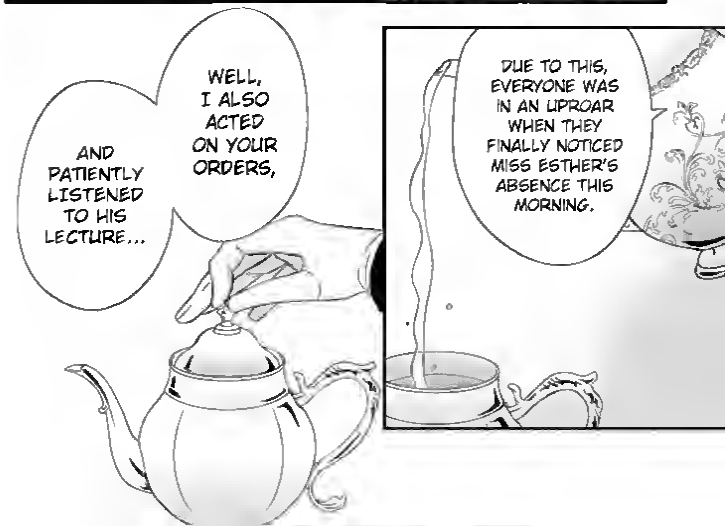

DRIP
ESTHER?
GOODBYE,
COUNT.

GASP
creak

MORNING ALREADY
KER-CHAK
CLATTER CLATTER
GOOD MORNING.

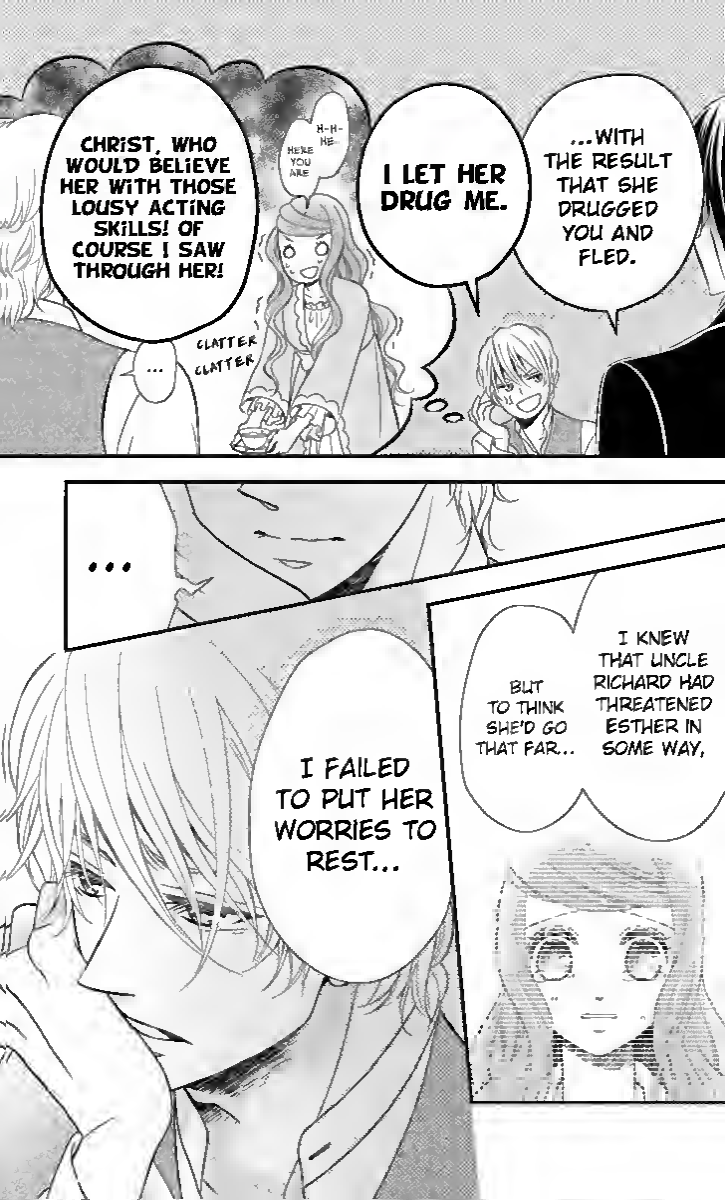
...LAST NIGHT, OUR DEAR STEWARD GATHERED ALL OF US DOWNSTAIRS AND STARTED SCOLDING US OUT OF NOWHERE.
CLANG
THIS WAS TO DISTRACT EVERYONE'S ATTENTION FROM THE FACT THAT MISS ESTHER WAS SNEAKING OUT THROUGH THE BACK-DOOR IN THE MEANTIME.
AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, HE ACTED ON MASTER RICHARD'S ORDERS.
SWISH

GOODNESS.
WHAT A FAITHFUL DOG HE IS.


DUE TO THIS, EVERYONE WAS IN AN UPROAR WHEN THEY FINALLY NOTICED MISS ESTHER'S ABSENCE THIS MORNING.
WELL, I ALSO ACTED ON YOUR ORDERS,
AND PATIENTLY LISTENED TO HIS LECTURE...

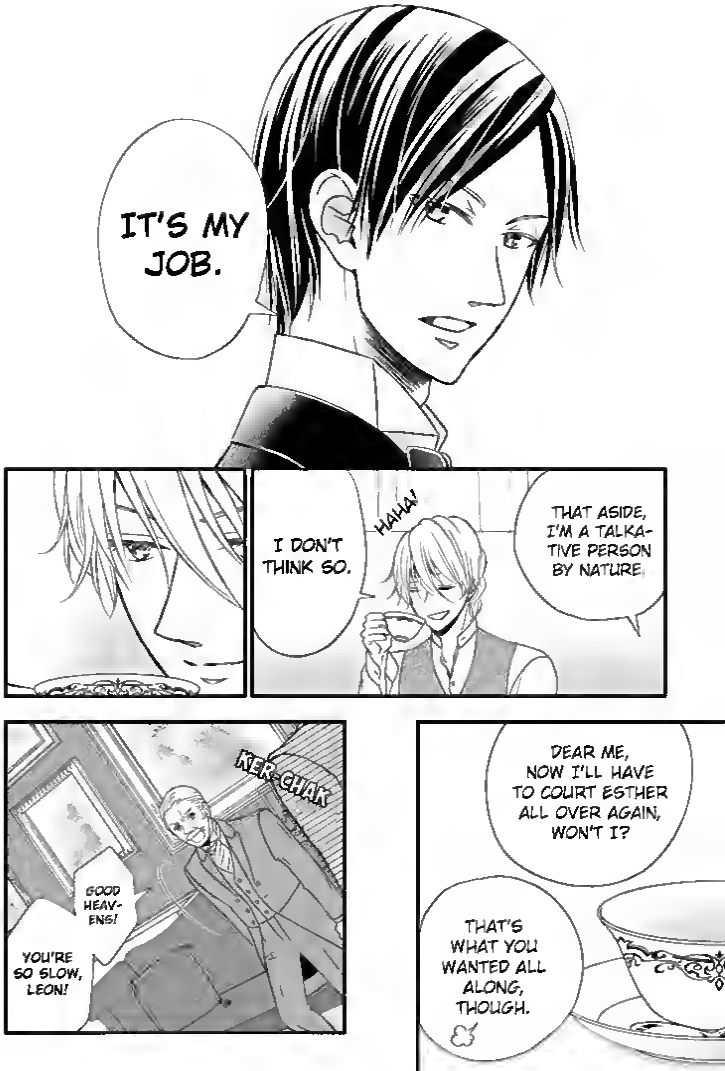
I WON'T CRY!
IRRITATED
SIGH
ALTHOUGH I DO WISH I HAD DETAINED HIM NOW THOUGH,
SEEING AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO CRY YOUR EYES OUT JUST LIKE A LITTLE CHILD.
SOMETHING HAS BEEN WEIGHING ON HER MIND...
EVER SINCE CHRIST-MAS...
I JUST KNEW.
...I KNEW IT ALL ALONG

I FIGURED I'D JUST PLAY ALONG FOR ONCE.
WHICH IS WHY...
THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE.
THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO GIVE THE GIRL WHO ALWAYS WORKED HARD ALONGSIDE ME, FOR THE SAKE OF MY FAMILY,
THAT'S JUST IT.
...THAT'S NOT FOR SOMEONE TO SAY WHO HALF-KIDNAPPED HER JUST TO FORCE HER TO BECOME HIS WIFE, I THINK.


...WITH THE RESULT THAT SHE DRUGGED YOU AND FLED.
I LET HER DRUG ME.
H-H-HE-HE'S YOU AKE
CHRIST, WHO WOULD BELIEVE HER WITH THOSE LOUSY ACTING SKILLS! OF COURSE I SAW THROUGH HER!
CLATTER CLATTER
...
...
I KNEW THAT UNCLE RICHARD HAD THREATENED ESTHER IN SOME WAY,
BUT TO THINK SHE'D GO THAT FAR...
I FAILED TO PUT HER WORRIES TO REST...

SO THIS IS ON ME.
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
GLARE
I BEG YOUR PARDON, MASTER RICHARD HAS ARRIVED
SHOW HIM OUT THE DOOR! I DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM!
A MOMENT AGO HE SAID IT WAS ON HIM...
BUT I SUPPOSE HE MUST HAVE TAKEN OFFENSE, NONETHELESS.
BUT, WELL...
IT SEEMS TO BE URGENT BUSINESS HE LOOKED RATHER AGITATED...
I SEE. PLEASE TELL HIM TO WAIT IN THE PARLOR.
YES!

HERE'S YOUR TEA.
...
...YOU'VE BEEN PRETTY TALKATIVE ALL MORNING...
IS THAT YOUR WAY OF SHOWING CONCERN FOR ME?
MASTER RICHARD IS WAITING, AFTER ALL.
I'LL PREPARE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES.


IT'S MY JOB.
I DON'T THINK SO.
HAHA!
THAT ASIDE, I'M A TALKATIVE PERSON BY NATURE.
KYA-CHAK
GOOD HEAVENS!
YOU'RE SO SLOW, LEON!
DEAR ME, NOW I'LL HAVE TO COURT ESTHER ALL OVER AGAIN, WON'T I?
THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED ALL ALONG, THOUGH.

!!!
I BEG YOUR PARDON, DEAR UNCLE.
...YOU SEE, LAST NIGHT MY DARLING PUT SOMETHING IN MY TEA AT A CERTAIN SOMONE'S SUGGESTION.
WHICH IS WHY I'VE BEEN SOUND ASLEEP UNTIL NOT SO LONG AGO.
UH ERR IS THAT SO...
THAT IS MOST UNFORTUNATE
AS EXPECTED, BRINGING IN A DAMPHYR WASN'T A GOOD IDEA AT ALL!
GLARE
Eek!
WHERE IS ESTHER? TELL ME.

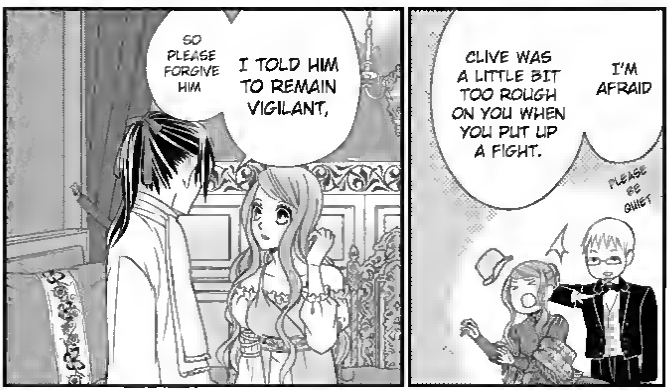
AS IF I'D DO THAT!
HMPH, AS IF YOU COULD FIGURE THIS OUT WHEN I DON'T EVEN KNOW IT MYSELF!
PARDON?
THEN I'LL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO FIND OUT
... UNCLE, MAY I ASK WHY YOU CAME TO SEEM ME TODAY?
HMPH
I WAS TOLD IT WAS AN URGENT MATTER?
YES .. I SUP-POSE...
UNCLE.
WELL... WE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT...
Mutter
SPEAK UP! SAY IT LOUD AND CLEAR!
APPARENTLY THERE WAS A RAID ON THE CARRIAGE THE GIRL WAS TRAVELING IN LAST NIGHT
WHEN WE DISCOVERED THE CARRIAGE THIS MORNING, ONLY SHE WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND...
!

I DARE SAY SHE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED BY A VAMPIRE.
AND JUDGING FROM HOW THE SITE LOOKED...

I CAN'T GO BACK THERE
ESTHER...!
MY HEAD HURTS.
I DON'T LIKE IT HERE.
I FEEL UNCOM-FORTABLE.
I WANT TO GO HOME.
HUH? HOME?
WHERE'S THAT SUP-POSED TO BE?
ANYMORE...

LEO...N...
You're really past all hope.
You dare to call another man's name and weep bitter tears while lying in my arms.
Just how cruel can you get, Esther?
HUH...?
CHR...

JUMP
OH, SHE AVOIDED ME?
YOU'RE AWAKE AT LAST.
IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE YOU WOULD BE WAKING UP ANYTIME SOON, SO I WAS ALREADY THINKING ABOUT GIVING YOU A KISS.
MASTER CHRIS!?
...UGH.
OH, SORRY ABOUT THAT.
STING


SO PLEASE FORGIVE HIM
I TOLD HIM TO REMAIN VIGILANT,
CLIVE WAS A LITTLE BIT TOO ROUGH ON YOU WHEN YOU PUT UP A FIGHT.
I'M AFRAID
PLEASE BE QUIET

JUMP
WH...
WHERE ARE WE!?
AND WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE ?
OH, RIGHT
I MIGHT HAVE TO EXPLAIN THINGS IN MORE DETAIL
BUT SINCE YOU'RE A DAMPHYR
YOU'VE PROBABLY ALREADY NOTICED THE UNUSUAL ATMOSPHERE IN HERE, RIGHT?

Well, to put it simply,
it's a Vampire's Den.
PEOPLE USUALLY CALL IT BY THE RATHER GRACEFUL NAME OF THE CASTLE OF THE BLACK ROSES.
YES, THIS IS WHERE MY BRETHREN AND I LIVE,
VERY MODESTLY, HUDDLING TOGETHER.

That being the case...
...!!!
THIS IS A TERRIBLE PLACE TO BE AT...!!!
THE REASON WHY I BROUGHT YOU HERE IS BE-CAUSE
I WANT YOU.
YOU DIDN'T BECOME LEON'S WIFE, AFTER ALL.
EH..?

What do you think, Esther?
you could just become mine, instead.

Will you be my bride?

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